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# Toward a University of the First Rank With James Cheek: A Decade of Changes, Unprecedented Growth

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# Special Report

Toward a  
University of  
the First Rank  
With James Cheek

**A Decade of Changes,  
Unprecedented Growth**

By Harriet Jackson Scarupa



*"James E. Cheek's job at Howard is an enormous one. But it is one which must produce noticeable improvements in numerous bad situations in a relatively brief time span."*

THE HILLTOP, September 19, 1969.

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## PART I

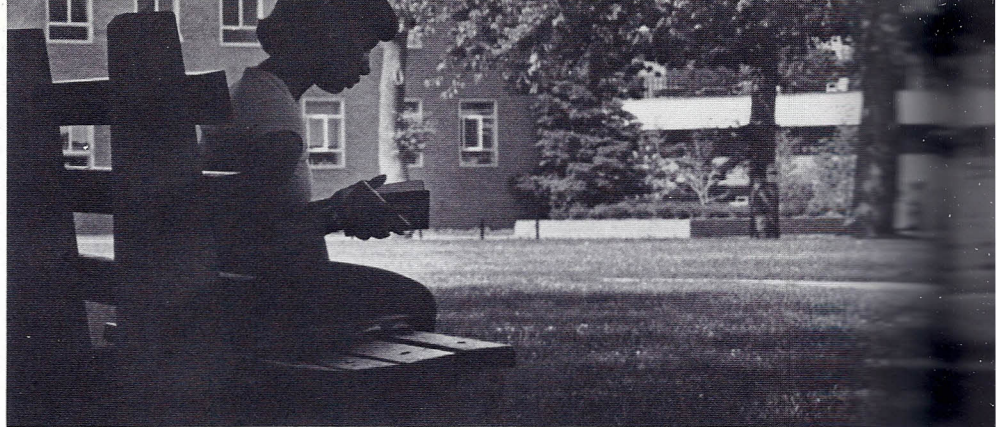
**J**ames E. Cheek, appointed president of Howard University at a time of unprecedented turmoil, has led the university on a path of unprecedented growth.

July 1979 marks the 10th anniversary of his tenure as chief executive of the university. His leadership has changed the face of the institution by building upon some of Howard's strongest traditions. New schools, programs, institutes, buildings, even a new campus have been added; existing schools and programs expanded and strengthened. The number of students, faculty and staff has increased, as has that crucial element which makes all the changes possible: the amount of funds flowing in the university's coffers. Old commitments—from an exploration of Black heritage to community outreach and academic excellence—have been reinforced.

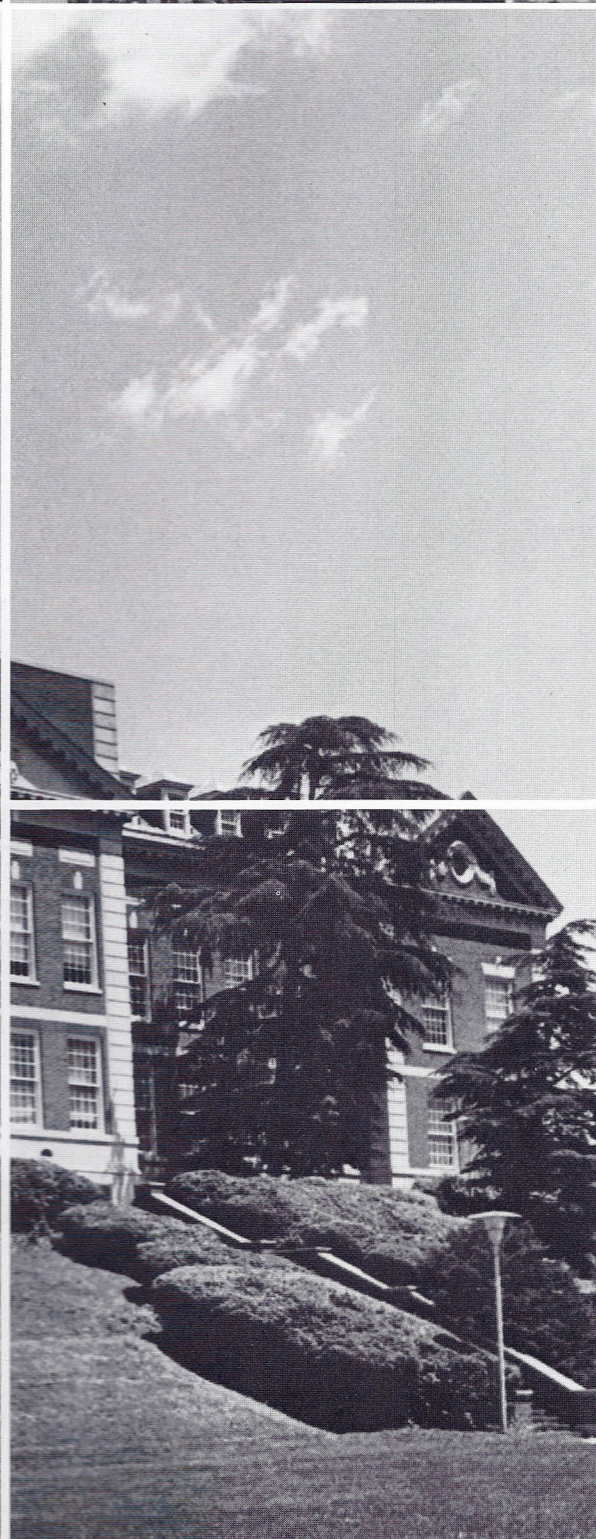
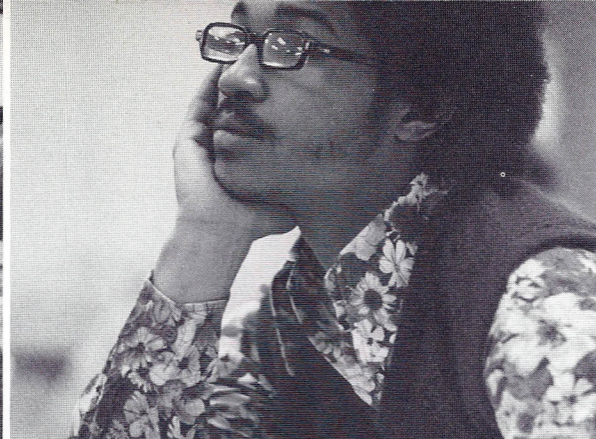
In his recent report on the university for the years 1976-78, Dr. Cheek observes: "The past decade has constituted a period of investigation and exploration for Howard University. The university has ventured into new educational frontiers as it expanded the scope of its academic offerings and intensified its capacity for research and public service. It was not without purpose, for the university shaped its programs and mobilized its resources to meet the real concerns of society. That is the test of relevancy."

"Relevancy," that battle cry of the student protestors of the '60s, is a word that comes easily to Dr. Cheek. And with reason. For many of the changes that have marked Howard University during the past decade—whether enabling students to have a larger say in educational policy or increasing the number of Black-oriented courses in the curriculum—are the same ones demanded by students during those turbulent days.

Dr. Cheek came to the university at a time when Howard was still reeling







under the twin pressures of Black power and student power. In the wake of the urban rebellions of the late '60s, Howard students—like many others across the country—embraced the cause of Black identity with ferocious intensity. And in their quest to have the campus reflect this intensity, in a very real sense, they brought the “battle” to academia. For many of them, Howard—despite its role as a champion of Black people—and Howard’s eminent president, Dr. James M. Nabrit Jr.—despite his pioneering work in civil rights law—simply weren’t “Black” enough. With all the fervor of youth (and with more than a modicum of historical amnesia, some might add), they accused the university of being too “white-oriented” in its academic offerings and too “ivory-towerish” in its stance toward Black oppression. Nor were these students content to sit back and have others decide on all matters relating to *their* education. They wanted a part in the decision-making process. The result of all this was turmoil.

In 1967, Dr. Nabrit had announced his resignation, saying he would stay on only until a successor could be found. Meanwhile, the turmoil continued. During the 1968-69 academic year alone, the campus experienced five different student boycotts and building takeovers, the largest of which (May 1969) resulted in closing the university for five days, the arrest of 21 students, including the student body president, and considerable physical damage to campus facilities.

Given the charged atmosphere on the campus, it was obvious some change must come to the university in order to assure enough tranquility for the educational process to proceed. Dr. Cheek, who had become president of Shaw University in Raleigh, N.C., at a tumultuous juncture in its history and who then had launched that university on a path of upward growth, seemed a natural candidate for the presidency of Howard. When he accepted the challenge, some



people, in fact, seemed to regard him as a savior. The writer of a 1969 *Ebony* article, for instance, observed that Dr. Cheek and his educator-brother [King V. Cheek] "are looked at hopefully by many as young Black Joshuas before the walls of American education's old Jerico."

**A**s Dr. Cheek took over the reins of the institution, the first question on everyone's mind was: What kind of change did he have in store? In his first press conference on July 8, 1969, he provided his own answer to the question: The answer, not of a savior, but a pragmatist. "We will not promote change for the sake of change," he said, "but where change is necessary we will regard it as a necessity. The students' demand for 'relevance' and the faculty's demand for 'excellence' are not contradictory and mutually exclusive. Both with different rhetoric seek the same ends."

Change was needed not only to calm the tense atmosphere on the campus, but because of a relatively new problem of long-range significance. The struggles waged during the civil rights movement had opened the doors of many of the nation's most prestigious predominantly-white academic institutions to more and more Black students and faculty (though their total numbers still remained small and the influence of Bakkism indicates it may become smaller still.)

Ironically, Howard, the spiritual home of many of those who helped push open these doors, found itself in danger of losing some of its most promising students and most gifted faculty members to these same institutions. To prevent such a "brain drain," it became obvious the university would have to institute changes that would make it competitive with well-financed predominantly white academic institutions. At the same time, Howard could not lose its historic role as one of the nation's major instruments for the uplift of Black people. Hence, Dr. Cheek's campaign to transform Howard

into a "university of the first rank," one that would make "being Black synonymous with being excellent."

In pursuit of this goal, of course, he was following in the tradition of his two distinguished predecessors: Dr. Mordecai W. Johnson and Dr. James M. Nabrit Jr. In 1926, when Dr. Johnson became the first Black president of Howard, the university was comprised of eight schools and colleges, none of which held national accreditation. By his retirement 34 years later, there were 10 fully-accredited schools and colleges; the university's financial footing was on a firmer ground—thanks to a regular annual Congressional appropriation; and the university had become home to some of the greatest Black scholars of the day. (See *New Directions*, January 1977, for an assessment of Dr. Johnson's impact on Howard.)

Under Dr. Nabrit, the growth of Howard continued as curriculum was expanded in every area while the university's physical plant increased in value by \$20 million. In this context, it is important that the turmoil characterizing the last years of Dr. Nabrit's presidency not obscure his role in laying the groundwork for the Howard of today.

*The Howard of today.* Regardless of one's personal opinion of Dr. Cheek (and he, like his two predecessors has not escaped controversy), few would deny that this scholar administrator has cast a giant shadow over the development of Howard University. This article will examine some of the major changes that have marked Howard in the past decade and try to assess their significance. Some of these changes are easy to measure, having to do with money or buildings or programs. Others, such as that elusive quality known as "the mood of the campus," are far less tangible but nonetheless important.

## PART II

Nothing, of course, is more tangible than money. The last decade has seen the

financial support of the university rise to the highest levels in its history. Observes Dr. Caspa L. Harris, vice president for business and fiscal affairs and treasurer of the university, "Without the money Dr. Cheek attracted everything else would be a dream. You need funds to get new programs going, to expand the programs you already have, to attract and maintain competitive faculty . . ." Or as Dr. Cheek himself said in a 1972 speech: "Money does not guarantee quality education, but, I am a firm believer that quality education cannot be provided without adequate and sufficient resources."

Consider, then, some figures provided by Dr. Harris: In 1969, Howard received \$18,231,000 in federal appropriations, exclusive of funds for the Howard University Hospital and for building construction. Ten years later, that appropriation had grown to \$81,287,000. The university's operating budget in the 1968-69 fiscal year was \$32,694,909. Ten years later, it had grown to \$146,472,760. Again these figures do not take into account the hospital or construction. The operation budget of the hospital was \$12,429,000 in 1968-69 and \$52,900,000 ten years later. Construction funds appropriated by the federal government have varied from year to year, but in the past decade they totalled \$96,651,000.

But federal appropriations don't tell the whole story. Alongside garnering more support from the federal government than ever before, Dr. Cheek has been responsible for "the decision to seek support in the private sector in an aggressive way," explains Dr. Roger D. Estep, vice president for development and university relations. "Dr. [Mordecai W.] Johnson recognized that Howard was not going to go anywhere if it had to depend solely on the support of alumni for funds," he observes. "In his effort to get more substantial funding, he concentrated on trying to get greater and more sustained support from the federal



James E. Cheek, Mordecai W. Johnson, James M. Nabrit, Jr.



government. At the time, corporations and foundations were giving limited funds to Black institutions. Today, we're trying to fund Howard from as many sources as possible."

This has meant cultivating alumni donors and trying to dispel the view some alumni and others hold that "Howard doesn't need any money because it gets all it needs from the federal government." It has also meant joining with prominent leaders in the corporate and diplomatic communities in a major fund-raising effort aimed at the private sector. Hence, the birth of the New Direction Fund [no connection to *New Directions* magazine] and its leadership group, the International Sponsors' Council. The fund, with a goal of \$100 million by 1982, had succeeded in raising almost \$36 million by May 2, 1978. And it even has meant calling on the faculty and staff of the university to give financial assistance to the growth of Howard through the Challenge Fund, which has raised close to \$1 million a year during the past five years.

Diversifying the financial base of the university—a key development in the past 10 years—is important because it can make Howard's future development less vulnerable to changes in the composition and interests of Congress, Dr. Estep said. At the same time, it assures the government that others are concerned about Howard's welfare. "It has a symbiotic effect," he says. "Money gets money."

Dr. Estep heads a division of the university which is responsible for development, governmental relations, alumni affairs, university relations and publications. And that fact in itself points up another major change at Howard during Dr. Cheek's presidency: the reorganization of the university into six different divisions, each headed by a vice president, each with a clear-cut area of responsibility. The other divisions are: academic affairs, health affairs, business and fiscal affairs, student affairs, and



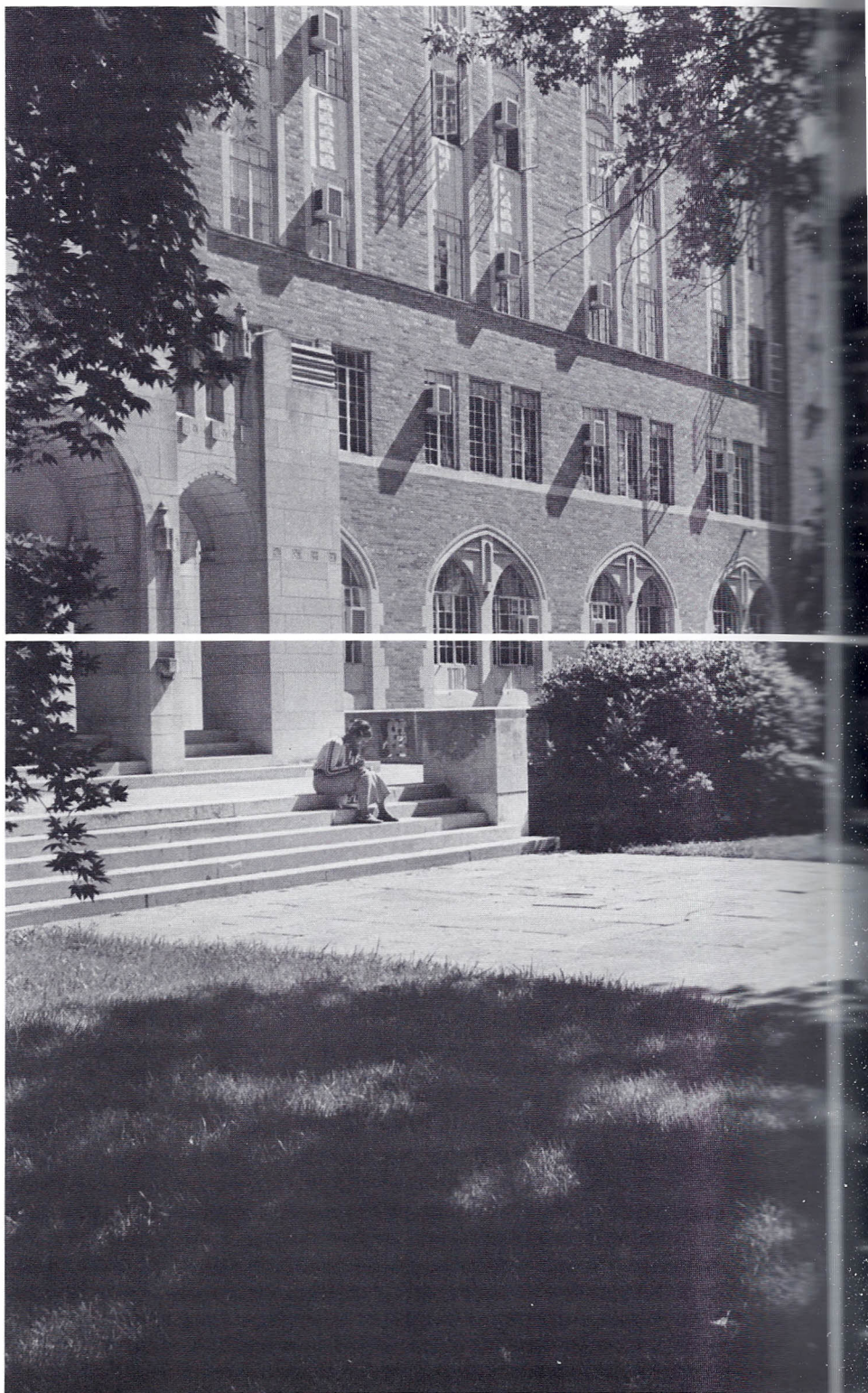
administration. The reorganization was initiated "to facilitate rather than impede" meeting Howard's educational objectives, observed Dr. Cheek in his report on the university, 1969-73.

Not only has the university's organizational chart been redrawn in the past 10 years, but so have its actual physical boundaries. With the acquisition of the Dunbarton campus, and the addition of the animal resource center in Beltsville, Howard obtained vital growing room.

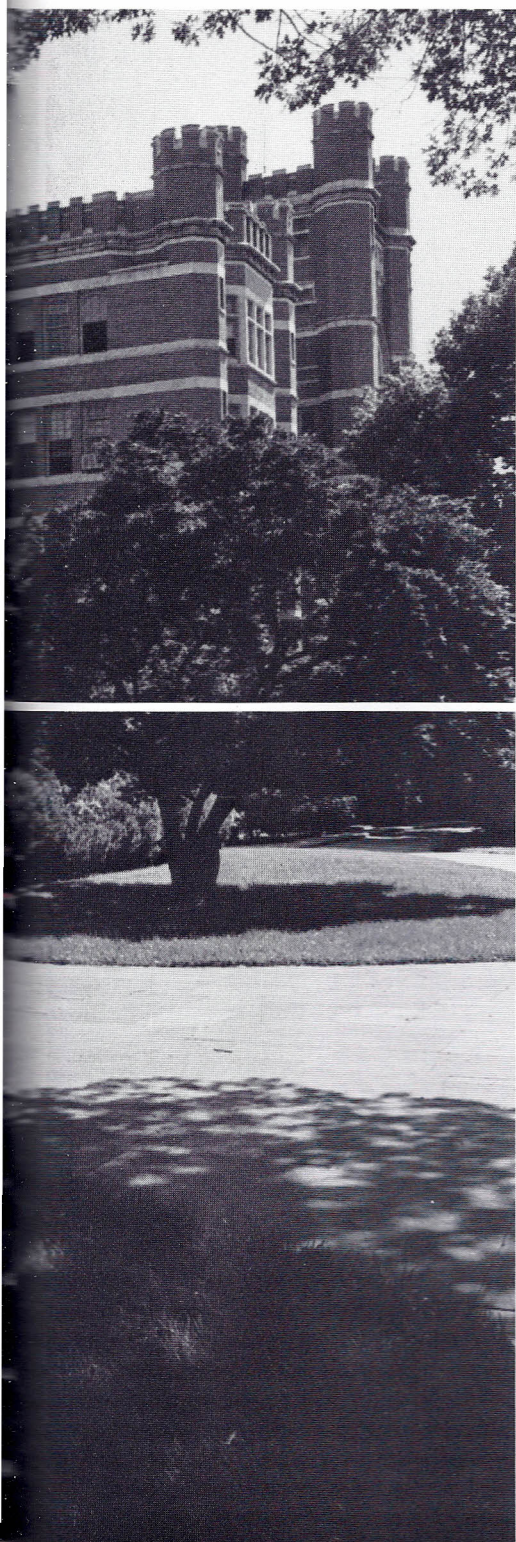
**T**he Beltsville facility, acquired in 1971, consists of 108 acres in Prince George's County, Md. It was deeded to the university by the federal government under the provisions of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 which allows the disposal of surplus government property for educational purposes.

A telescope has been in use since the property has been acquired. The first phase of the center which will provide housing areas for research animals is now under construction. Future plans include an addition for advanced research in the life and physical sciences which will serve programs in astrophysics, botany, environmental sciences, engineering, soil erosion and surface hydrology. Upon full development, "the Beltsville campus will give us the advantage of a rural as well as an urban location," notes Dr. Angella D. Ferguson, assistant vice president for health affairs.

The Dunbarton campus, acquired in 1974, is located on a lush 19.4-acre site in northwest Washington, off Connecticut Avenue. It was purchased from the Sisters of the Holy Cross after Dunbarton College, a women's liberal arts college, closed. The campus, with four buildings, is the new home of the law school, the university press, several of the university's institutes and various administrative departments. "The Dunbarton acquisition has provided the university with the opportunity to develop







the law school and many other programs in a way that was not possible previous to that time," observes Dr. Owen D. Nichols, vice president for administration and secretary of the university.

### PART III

Turning to the larger academic realm, the last 10 years have been characterized by such myriad changes that it would take a book-length manuscript to document them adequately. What follows, then, should be considered the highlights.

First, the faculty. It is far larger, better-paid and with more credentials than 10 years ago. In the 1969-70 academic year, Howard had 644 full-time faculty members. In the 1978-79 academic year, there were 1,061 full-time faculty members, 855 with earned doctorates or the equivalent. (e.g. M.D., D.D.S., LL.D.) [Figures of the number of faculty holding advanced degrees in the 1969-70 academic year are not readily available; in the 1972-73 academic year, the number of faculty with earned doctorates stood at 302.] In 1969, faculty salaries were among the lowest in the southeastern region of universities of comparable size. By 1972-73, they had achieved parity with other major universities.

The current chairman of the faculty senate, Dr. Herbert O. Reid, Charles Hamilton Houston distinguished professor of law, cites the actual physical growth of the faculty as a key development of Howard's past decade. Alongside this, he observes, have been "increased faculty support services: secretarial help, duplicating and reproduction equipment, graduate assistantships, more grants from Howard itself to underwrite research (the university-sponsored Faculty Research Program) as well as greater help to faculty in procuring grants from outside the university. New in the past decade is the Department of Governmental Relations, which researches the availability of grants and communicates this information to the faculty and helps them apply for funding.

The result of all this support, says Dr. Reid, a Howard faculty member for 31 years, is that "academic and intellectual productivity has increased." He states: "I don't see any 'brain drain' here. Instead, there's been a 'push-pull' effect. The experience of so many Blacks at white universities has been so negative that Howard continues to attract fine Black faculty. You also have a situation where some Black faculty at white universities want to come to Howard for sabbaticals or visiting professorships or the like because they view the university as a place of intellectual fertilization and inspiration around the whole race issue."

Responsible for some of the faculty additions at Howard in the past 10 years have been the eight new schools created during that time. They are:

■ *The College of Nursing*, established in 1969 shortly after Dr. Cheek's arrival, prepares nurses to be part of an increasingly-sophisticated health-care delivery system.

■ *The School of Architecture and Planning*, established in 1970, was formed to meet the critical need for more minority architects and city planners who are dedicated to improving the living environment of mankind, in general, Blacks and other minorities, in particular. While the university had offered architectural courses in the past, no autonomous school existed until 1970.

■ *The School of Business and Public Administration*, also established in 1970, has its roots in Howard's first "commercial" school which opened 100 years earlier. Now autonomous, it has one of the fastest-growing enrollments on campus. "A lot of students are interested in business, an area vital to the strength of the Black community," observes Dr. Lorraine A. Williams, vice president for academic affairs at the university. The school is also the headquarters for the Center for Banking Education, the Labor-Management Relations Institute, the Center for Insurance



Education and the Institute for Minority Business Education.

■ *The School of Communications*, established in 1971, reflects the university's commitment to increasing the minority presence in print, radio and television journalism. "It is crucial to have minority group representation in the communications field, not only as participants but as owners and managers," explains Dr. Williams. Like the School of Business and Public Administration, it boasts an expanding enrollment.

■ *The School of Education* was established in 1971. Before that, education courses were offered through a department in the College of Liberal Arts. Explaining the rationale for the establishment of a separate school, Dr. Williams observes, "Even though, statistically, there are less jobs for teachers today, there is still a great need for teachers in the Black community." In recent years, though, the school has expanded its focus to include the preparation of teachers in the fields of special education and adult education. Under its aegis is the Center for the Study of Handicapped Children and Youth.

■ *The School of Human Ecology*, founded in 1974, has as its emphasis "the scientific study of the relation of the human being to his environment," explains Dr. Williams. The approach here is interdisciplinary, enabling students to concentrate on such areas as consumer education and resource management, human development, human nutrition and food, international studies in human ecology. The school has some origins in the Department of Home Economics, established in 1914 in the college of Liberal Arts.

■ *The College of Allied Health Sciences* was established in 1974, having previously existed in somewhat different form as a department in the College of Medicine. The new college, which maintains close ties with others in the





health affairs division, offers degree programs in such areas as physical therapy, occupational therapy, clinical nutrition and radiologic technology.

■ *The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences* was inaugurated as a totally autonomous school with its own faculty and budget in 1976, though Howard had offered graduate programs as far back as 1870. Established "to develop the intellectual potential of superior individuals who will have an imprint on their chosen fields," the graduate school is crucial to Dr. Cheek's campaign to ensure that Howard become a "university of the first rank." The emphasis put on strengthening graduate and professional education at Howard during the past 10 years has been buttressed by significant grants from the Ford Foundation to develop graduate programs in history, political science, sociology and economics, Dr. Williams points out.

Existing schools have also seen their share of changes in the past 10 years, though these changes have been somewhat less visible. The College of Fine Arts has established a Center for Ethnic Music as well as an award-winning children's theater . . . The College of Medicine has changed its requirements so that students must pass National Board of Medical Examiners qualifying exams between their second and third years, a measure designed to ensure high-quality medical practitioners . . . The School of Religion, housed today in expanded off-campus quarters in northeast Washington, has placed increasing emphasis on urban ministry courses and the development in its students of an urban consciousness. Its Urban Institute for Religious Studies, an adult education program, annually serves about 100 community members . . . The School of Engineering has substantially increased its research capability in electrical engineering with the opening of two solid state electronics laboratories . . . The School of Law has instituted a new curriculum, one offering a core program for

the first two years and an elective program in the third . . . A sampling of changes. Just a sampling.

But what of that vociferous '60s demand that Howard's curriculum be more reflective of the Black experience? That demand is met in many ways through the Afro-American Studies Resource Center, located within the College of Liberal Arts, and the African Studies and Research Program, within the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. But the Black perspective is not confined solely to such "Black studies" programs as they are in so many predominantly-white academic institutions. It runs through virtually every department, school, college, program and event of the university.

Brigitte Rouson, editor of the campus newspaper, *The Hilltop*, for the past year, is less happy with some aspects of the current Howard scene, for instance, but lauds the university for giving students "a decent number of opportunities to explore things from a Black perspective." "In most courses," she says, "professors do encourage discussion of how things affect Black people. Classes are geared towards consciousness raising." Some outside observers credit Dr. Cheek for the noticeable Black consciousness that seems to characterize Howard's past decade.

A December 1971 *Ebony* article entitled "The Metamorphosis of Howard University," for instance, contended that in "less than three years," Dr. Cheek "has nudged in bolder and blacker directions a university hide-bound by 104 years of white-oriented 'Negro' tradition." And the writer cited what he saw as an "esthetic-educational-ideological-psychological 'revolution' now transforming all the disciplines at Howard as it moves—at last—toward building a new 'Black university' within the old."

A less rhetorical, though more accurate perception comes from Dr. Williams, historian as well as administrator. "Yes," she says, "in the last 10 years there have

been more courses dealing with the Black experience, a sharper focus on African studies and the like. But it's important to remember that an interest in African and Afro-American history and heritage at Howard is not new. Howard has had Black history courses since 1922. So *please* don't write that Howard didn't have any Black history courses until the '70s! People like Alain Locke, E. Franklin Frazier, Carter G. Woodson, Charles H. Wesley and William Leo Hansberry were teaching about Black culture back in the '20s. As far back as 1890, Kelly Miller even had the concept of a Howard museum to preserve Black history. [See April 1979 *New Directions*]. The sharper focus on Black studies under Dr. Cheek is not a departure—but a continuation—of the Howard tradition."

Dr. Reid, the faculty senate chairman, observes at Howard today a less rhetorical but more scholarly interpretation of "Blackness" than during the height of the student turmoil at the end of the '60s. "Unfortunately, in those days many students held the notion that knowledge is the tool of the oppressor, that to get knowledge undermines commitment," he says ironically. "That's stupid. In omitting French, for instance, you're eliminating the means to communicate with many of your Black brothers in Africa. You need to be conversant, too, with European history so you can understand its relationship to your own. Black awareness is good, but anti-intellectualism is devastating. What we need is Black intellectual pursuit and, I think, there's a strong recognition of that at Howard today."

#### PART IV

What then of that second key demand made by students at the end of the '60s: that Howard climb down from its "ivory tower" to do more to address social problems and reach out to the larger Black community. Again Dr. Williams has a reminder. "Howard has always reached



out to the community," she says crisply. While there were some Howardites who seemed solely concerned with tracing blue veins through their skin and acquiring material wealth, there were always those who exhibited a strong social consciousness—and acted on it. The examples are endless. What *has* been new during the past 10 years is that certain mechanisms have been put in place to institutionalize this community outreach and social concern at the same time they serve to enhance the scholarly and scientific mission of the university. Chief among them have been the research institutes and centers established during the last several years. The major ones are:

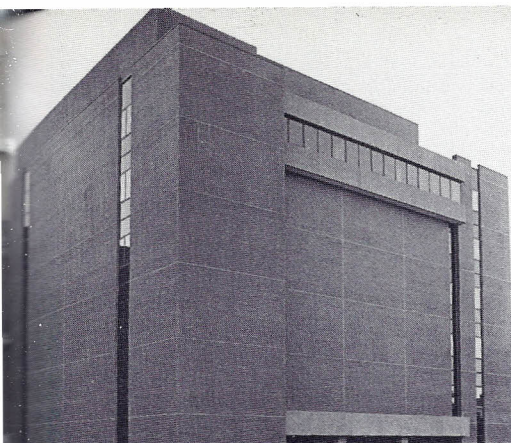
■ *The Institute for Urban Affairs and Research*, established in 1972, focuses on the development of functional solutions to urban problems through research and community outreach. Its academic division consists of five programs: University Without Walls, Administration of Justice, Upward Bound, Community Action and Urban Studies. Its research division has three major programs: Mental Health Research and development Center, Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center and Social Science Resource Center.

■ *The Institute for the Arts and Humanities*, also founded in 1972, has as its mission "to focus and concentrate the effort and commitment of the university to preserve, study, enhance, develop, disseminate, and celebrate the artistic and creative aspects of the Afro-American heritage so as to demonstrate the contributions which this heritage has made and is making to the totality of world culture." Among its means of doing this are: research projects and videotape, workshops, seminars, an annual Black writer's conference, artists-in-residence.

■ *The Institute for the Study of Educational Policy* was founded in 1974 "to play a major role in the development of educational policies that improve the







status, participation, and outcomes of Blacks in higher education." Through its research, conferences and publications, it has made significant contributions in the areas of affirmative action and equal opportunity. One recent thrust of its work involved an examination of the implications and impact of the Bakke case.

■ *The Institute for Child Development and Family Life*, established as a separate entity in 1972, brings university-wide resources to bear on the problems attendant to the growth and development of children and their families. Through the years, the institute has sponsored training, research and service projects aimed at meeting the needs of the Black child.

■ *The Institute for Drug Abuse and Addiction* was established in 1972 and currently operates under the auspices of the Department of Psychiatry of the College of Medicine. It is engaged in developing and providing educational and clinical services relating to drug abuse and addiction, with primary emphasis on the university community.

■ *The Moorland-Spingarn Research Center*, housed in Founders Library, was established as a separate and autonomous research library in 1973, though its roots go back to 1914. Its archival, documentation, preservation, library, research, publication and public services have expanded dramatically since 1973. Today, the center contains what is generally regarded as one of the largest and most valuable collections on Black history and literature in the world. Among notable acquisitions during the past decade: the papers of Mordecai W. Johnson, Benjamin E. Mays, Paul Robeson, Carlton B. Goodlett, Mary Church Terrell.

In addition to such research-oriented centers, the past decade at Howard has seen the birth and development of another type of center, one of vital importance to the whole academic program.

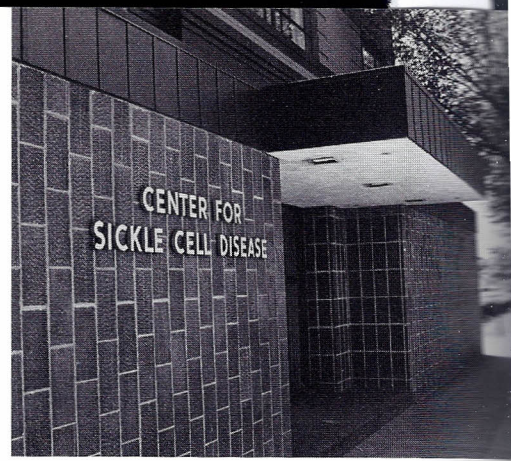
This is the Center for Academic Reinforcement (CAR), established as an autonomous unit of the university in 1974. The center seeks to upgrade the verbal, mathematical and study skills of high-risk but potentially-promising first-year students so that they will be able to cope with the academic rigors that await them.

"The need for the center reflects the fact that many of our students are coming from high schools that did not sufficiently prepare them for college-level work," Dr. Williams explains. "They don't have the skills college students did in the past. I'd like to stress, though, that this is not a problem unique to Howard — or to Black institutions. It is a national problem." CAR assisted 2,420 students in primary programs of study over a recent four-year period, for instance, while its faculty and staff have found themselves in great demand by other institutions seeking to implement similar programs.

In the medical arena, Howard has played an increasingly important role in both research and community service during the past 10 years. Of special note in this thrust are its two major research centers: The Center for Sickle Cell Disease, founded in 1971 and housed in its own building since 1975; the Cancer Research Center, founded in 1972 and soon to move into a new \$7.5 million facility.

**T**he Center for Sickle Cell Disease coordinates Howard's ongoing sickle cell research. It also coordinates comprehensive care for victims of the disease, disseminates information about the disease, provides facilities for accurate screening and counseling of persons with atypical hemoglobins, provides a consultative laboratory diagnostic service for physicians and operates a screening laboratory for members of the community. "It has been a pacesetter in the area of sickle cell disease," sums up Dr. Carlton P. Alexis, vice president for health affairs.







The Cancer Research Center has stood in the forefront of the nation's cancer research and education effort. With the opening of the center's new six-story building, the center will be able to consolidate its cancer research activities which are now dispersed throughout the university. It will be the only facility of its kind designed specifically to conduct long-term multidisciplinary research into cancer among Black Americans. The center will also provide services and cancer information to the community, and clinical and research training for medical students.

The new facility will be located adjacent to the hospital.

*The hospital.* Surely, the construction of the Howard University Hospital should be high up on anyone's list of the decade's important achievements. The 486-bed facility, constructed at an approximate cost of \$43 million (not including equipment and furnishings), opened in 1975, replacing the antiquated Freedmen's Hospital. With the new building, observed Dr. Cheek at the cornerstone-laying ceremony, Howard assumed "a special trust . . . not simply to serve a portion of the District of Columbia, or a particular race, but to maintain a teaching hospital that, through example and direct training, will reach out to improve the health care of Americans everywhere."

"The construction of the hospital was a landmark event," agrees Dr. Alexis. "There had been talk about such a hospital since the Civil War but it's to Dr. Cheek's credit that he was finally able to realize the dream. The hospital has provided us with a modern structure, has given us better facilities and ancillary services, has increased tremendously the number of patients we're able to treat. Because of it, we're now able to offer a more comprehensive set of services and have people with different kinds of expertise on staff. We've developed one of the country's finest kidney transplant teams, for example." Reflecting this, in 1975 the hospital re-

ceived formal approval from HEW as a kidney transplant center. And the hospital's pioneering work in intra-operative radiation therapy (used in cancer treatment) has earned it national and international attention. In March of this year, for instance, Mrs. Jihan Sadat, wife of president Andwar Sadat of Egypt, made a special visit to the hospital to examine its cancer treatment equipment.

In addition, Dr. Alexis observes: "The hospital has made possible increased research efforts by providing labs for clinical research. One spinoff of this, of course, has been the development of the cancer center. It has also meant we've been able to increase our enrollment in the total health affairs division and have been able to attract high-quality students, faculty and staff." Dr. Alexis notes with satisfaction, for instance, that Howard medical students have a success rate of 97-99 percent on the national medical boards. This he attributes not only to the much-improved medical facilities and equipment made possible by the hospital but to the College of Medicine's "emphasis and insistence on academic excellence." The reason for this is obvious, he says: "Black people don't need or deserve second-class medical care."

Further evidence of the university's commitment to high quality medical training is the dedication on May 10 of the Seeley G. Mudd building, the College of Medicine's new facility for pre-clinical instruction. The \$5.1 million five-story structure, named after a prominent Los Angeles physician, will contain research laboratories, seminar and lecture rooms, study areas and administrative and faculty offices.

New construction on the campus during the past 10 years has not been confined to the medical area, of course. Consider, the Armour J. Blackburn University Center. Like the hospital, the center represents the fruition of a long-held dream. After years of planning, the handsome, spacious \$10-million building was dedicated in April. Named after

a former Howard dean of students who initiated the original plans for the facility, the building houses a wide array of recreational, educational and dining areas for students, faculty, staff, alumni and guests. Observes Dr. Carl E. Anderson, vice president for student affairs, "Before, there was no central place on campus where members of the entire university community could just go to relax. This new building will be a focal point of campus life."

Other new buildings to open on the campus since 1969 include the modern, glass-walled School of Social Work (though its plans and initial construction began much before that); two academic support buildings; two prefab faculty office buildings; the University Health Services building; and the School of Engineering's Chemical Engineering wing. Meanwhile, the College of Dentistry is undergoing a major expansion with construction of two additional floors. Also the target of major renovation efforts during the past decade: the chemistry building, the power plant, Founders Library, the old Freedmen's Hospital complex, the medical-dental library and numerous dormitories. On February 12, 1974, Howard Hall, once the residence of Gen. Oliver O. Howard, after whom the university was named, was officially entered in the National Register of Historical Places, thus setting the stage for its future restoration.

## PART V

Many of the innovations at Howard in the past 10 years, though, don't fall neatly into categories like "new schools," "new institutes, and "new buildings." A miscellany of other developments over the past decade might include the following:

■ *The Howard University Press* was formerly organized in 1972, thus becoming the first university press to be established by a predominantly Black academic institution. From the start, it has demonstrated a strong commitment to publishing works that will meet

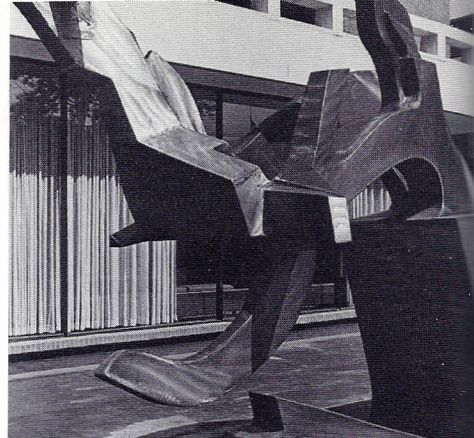


the critical needs of Black people. The 40 books it has published so far have been favorably received both nationally, and in some cases, internationally. Among its significant accomplishments: the award of a publishing contract from the United States National Archives and Records Service.

■ *WHUR*, a commercial FM radio station, went on the air in December 1971, thus becoming the first Black-controlled radio outlet in the metropolitan Washington area. The station was a gift from the Washington Post-Newsweek Company. Its smooth, easy music and public service information and news programs have made it a popular station in the Washington area. "By providing entertainment and worthwhile information, the station has been a means to reach out to the community," observes Dr. Nichols. "At the same time, it gives communications students the chance to learn about radio and gain experience."

■ In 1974, the Federal Communications Commission approved the university's application to operate a non-commercial educational television station on Channel 32. *WHMM-TV*, as it will be known, will be the first educational television station to be owned by a predominantly Black university. In its statement of purpose, the university told the FCC that the station would "reflect the institution's mission to ensure that the Black presence is felt in education." With major equipment purchased and a new four-studio complex soon to be constructed adjacent to the old Freedmen's Hospital, the station is expected to be in operation in about a year. Like *WHUR*, *WHMM* also will serve as a training laboratory for students in the School of Communications.

■ *The Howard University Museum* opened in the Founders Library as a unit of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center in February of this year—thus representing the fruition of another long-held dream. The museum contains more than 200 artifacts, rare documents and illus-





trations from the Research Center's rich Afro-American, African and Caribbean collections. Its inaugural exhibit, for instance, featured materials dealing with slavery, the abolitionist movement, the Civil War and Reconstruction.

■ In 1971 Howard became a charter member of the MEAC (*Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference*). "That was a significant landmark on the part of a predominantly Black institution," says Leo F. Miles, director of intercollegiate athletics for the university, "one representing the striving of Black institutions for first-class citizenship in the athletic world." (Previously, Howard was a member of the all-Black CIAA (Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association.) Membership in MEAC reflects Dr. Cheek's "emphasis on excellence in athletics comparable with excellence in academics," observes Miles. That this was considered a departure is obvious from the comment made by a Washington *Post* reporter in a 1974 article: "A bid by Howard, a university traditionally proud of its academic reputation, for athletic power seems about as likely as a devout Republican suddenly becoming a staunch Democrat."

Before Dr. Cheek's administration, for example, the intercollegiate athletic program was simply included as part of the College of Liberal Art's physical education department, there was no full-time intercollegiate athletic director, no full-time coaches, few provisions for athletic scholarships and the entire athletic budget was puny. In the past decade, all this has changed. Miles eagerly points out some of the highlights stemming from that change: Howard teams have achieved NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Division 1 status in all sports except football (where it holds Division IAA status.) Howard's soccer team captured the NCAA Division 1 Championship in 1974 with a perfect record, the first and only time a Black institution has won and kept a Division 1 national championship. [Two

years earlier, the soccer team captured a similar title, but the championship was later revoked by the NCAA due to alleged recruiting irregularities.] Also, in 1974, Howard's baseball team won the MEAC championship. In 1973, a women's varsity program was initiated and, with it, the beginning of athletic scholarships for women as well as for men.

In 1977, Howard's basketball team toured Brazil. Last year, for the first time, Howard athletes were drafted by the National Football League and the National Basketball Association. The most significant development as far as athletics are concerned is a proposed new university stadium that would seat 20,000 spectators and provide parking for some 1,000 cars. The new stadium, to replace the current facility, would be built at an estimated cost of \$16 million. "When we get that, it will be fantastic," exults Miles. "It falls in line with the whole goal of achieving excellence in athletics as well as academics. Athletics, by its very nature, gets a lot of free exposure."

■ A *University Libraries System* was established in 1970-71, part of a continuing drive to upgrade library facilities, collections and services. In March 1978, Howard acquired its one millionth book.

■ A branch of the *United National Bank* opened on the Howard campus in 1973. In addition to providing full banking services to the community and the university, it has enabled business students to correlate classroom learning with practical aspects of banking and finance.

■ *Cramton Auditorium*, with 1500 seats and excellent acoustics, has evolved into a "university-community facility," Dr. Nichols observes. "Whereas in the past, it was used sparingly by the institution and there were strong controls on how it could be used, within the last 10 years, it has become one of the most popular gathering places in the city."

■ *New Directions*, the Howard University magazine, has won awards from the Council for Advancement and Support to Education (CASE), the Printing Industries of America, McGraw Hill and the Advertising Club of Washington. Several of its articles were reprinted in national publications. Its evolution into a high-quality intellectual magazine—since the first issue came out late 1973—reflects the overall improvement in all university publications over the past 10 years, observes Dr. Estep.

■ *The Board of Trustees* increased in size from 27 to 31 members in 1970. Along with this, it has experienced a higher level of activity and greater visibility than ever before, notes Dr. Nichols. "There was a time when the board was regarded as some mysterious body. With the involvement of board members in public university functions, such as the Charter Day Convocation, this has changed." In 1975, Dr. Geraldine Pittman Woods was elected chairman of the board, the first time in the history of the university a woman has held the post.

■ *The Office of University Planning* was established in 1976 to coordinate and review planning on a university-wide basis, taking into account input from students, faculty, administrators and trustees. The office has the ultimate responsibility for the development and maintenance of the University Master Plan, a comprehensive plan that will be used to guide Howard's direction over the next 8-15 years. Supervising its work is retired army Maj. Gen. Frederic E. Davison, executive assistant to Dr. Cheek.

■ A *computerized registration system* was initiated in 1976, reflecting the increased use of computer operations by the university as a whole. Called SOLAR, "it is probably one of the most elaborate registration systems in the country," says Dr. Anderson. The computerization was designed to ease the hassles students had previously experi-



34 ended in the registration process. [See *New Directions*, April '77].

## PART VI

*The students.* The students, after all, are the *raison d'être* of any university. Budget, schools, institutes, buildings and the type of things previously mentioned in this report all ultimately serve the student body. When one examines changes relating to student life during the past 10 years, though, sometimes one runs into more amorphous territory.

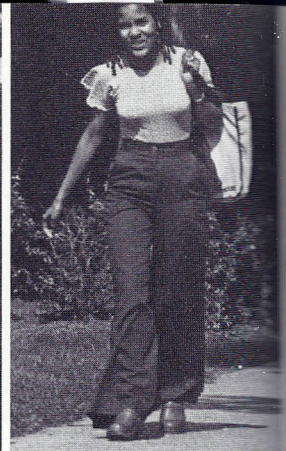
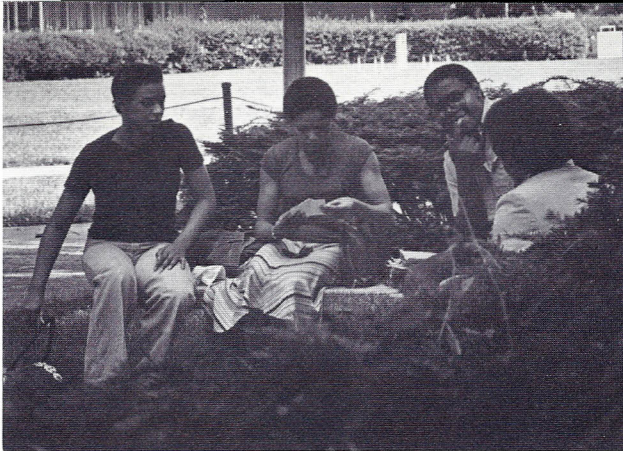
One uncontestable fact: there are more students. In 1969-70, enrollment stood at 8,667. By 1978-79, it had grown to 11,229.

Another uncontestable fact: there are far more support services for students today than there were 10 years ago.

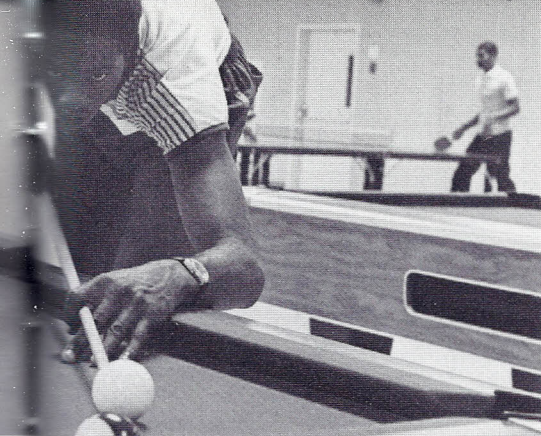
Dr. Anderson quickly reels off some of them: More students (61 percent) are receiving financial aid than ever before. The counseling program has been expanded significantly, in 1977-78 logging 6,422 hourly counselor-student contacts, for example. Career planning and placement services have also expanded and an annual Career Day has benefitted students and employers alike. Meanwhile, a student employment program has opened a wide range of on-campus jobs for students.

A third uncontestable fact: there are more *mechanisms* for student participation in the decision-making process of the university than ever before.

In 1970, the Board of Trustees approved Dr. Cheek's recommendation that students become full fledged, voting members of the board. Along with this was the decision to include students on virtually all university-wide committees which advise the president on matters of policy as well as similar committees within individual schools and colleges. These decisions, acknowledges Dr. Nichols, "were in direct response to the student demands made in the '60s. But the important factor is that it was the president of the institution who







went before the board with the recommendation that it be done." Similarly Dr. Anderson remarks, "I think Dr. Cheek made the recommendation to the board not simply because he was responding to student demands but because of his own philosophy that young people do have a significant contribution to make. This, though, is to be distinguished from even the slightest suggestion that students should control the university."

Ade Sami, president of the Howard University Student Association (HUSA) over the past academic year, has a different vantage point. "Students struggled for a place on the Board of Trustees and university-wide committees," he says. "I don't think it should be written that the administration, out of the goodness of its heart, decided students should play a role in decision-making. This came out of struggle. Just like with the trade unions. Workers didn't get better working conditions out of the goodness of the bosses' hearts but because they fought for better working conditions."

As the tone of Sami's remark suggests, the honeymoon days between Howard students (at least, *some* Howard students) and the university administration may well be over. In recent years, for example, the fact that students are excluded from committees dealing with faculty hiring and tenure has become a bone of contention. The student viewpoint, as expressed by Sami, is that this exclusion represents "a denial of academic freedom."

The faculty viewpoint, as expressed by Dr. Reid, is this: "Student input as to faculty appointment and retention is desirable. But the final judgment is that of the faculty." Meanwhile, the controversy continues. Last March, for example, some students used the occasion of Charter Day to stage an orderly demonstration to protest the denial of tenure to two faculty members in the political science department.

"Some students still don't feel they have enough say in how things are run

at Howard," Dr. Anderson admits. "But the mechanisms for participation and the channels of communication are there. Students, for instance, have made very helpful contributions on committees dealing with recruitment, residence hall improvement and curriculum development." On the broader socio-political front, too, student concerns were influential in shaping a resolution passed by the Board of Trustees in March 1978 to forbid the university from dealing with firms doing substantial business with South Africa.

#### PART VII

That students repeatedly cite South Africa as an issue of vital concern is reflective of the "mood of the campus" today.

Despite all the media talk about this being a "me decade" with people more concerned with examining their navels than larger social problems, there are many who argue that Howard students have not forgotten their concern with society's injustices. Certainly, this was true during the early days of Dr. Cheek's administration. In May 1970, following the killings of six Black men during disturbances in Augusta, Ga. and two Black students at Jackson State College, Howard students requested that all classes be cancelled and the remainder of the semester be devoted to discussions around the whole issue of Black survival.

In an emotional statement to the faculty, Dr. Cheek explained his rationale for agreeing with the request: "Students across the nation are angry, frustrated, outraged and almost at the brink of despair because of the character, substance, form and nature of the society in which they live and which they shall soon inherit. Some students—our students—have asked the university to be their supporters, not their enemies; their advocates, not their antagonists . . . I have honored a request which I find legitimate, and have offered my assistance in whatever way I can—peacefully and without violence—to help our students make and keep our nation aware that it



36 cannot endure for long continuing to oppress its own citizens."

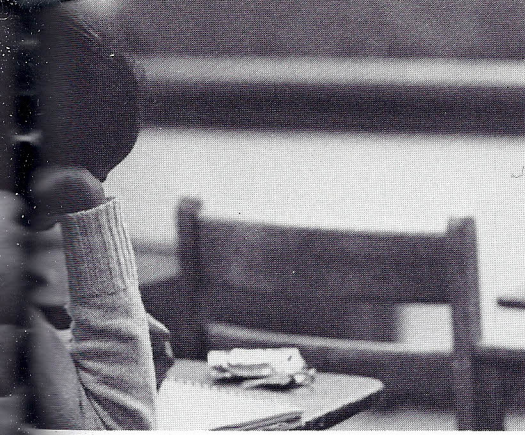
**T**oday's campus is a far different place than it was during the emotional height of those days—or during the tumultuous student power—Black power days which preceded them. "But I still believe students are interested in socio-political issues," argues Ade Sami. "I hear them discussing things like South Africa, unemployment, police brutality, the whole question of how Afro-Americans deserve a larger share of the national prosperity. The Movement is picking up. Students are challenging what they see as injustices whether on campus or off. After the '60s, with the civil rights laws, the end of the draft, the end of the Vietnam War, people felt the system was willing to give up a few things. Everybody sat back waiting to harvest the fruits of the struggles of the '60s. But after Nixon, the emphasis on law and order, Watergate, Bakke, the climbing unemployment among Black people, students can see that the issues of the '60s are coming back—in a more sophisticated and subtle form."

Current students may seem less concerned with social issues than career objectives, observes Dr. Anderson. "But," he adds, "in light of the ever-changing job market, the ever-growing unemployment condition, the pullback in the commitment to affirmative action, I don't blame them for being career conscious. If students are more concerned with careers today that doesn't mean they are divorced from what's happening in the larger society. It means they are realistic."

Adds *Hilltop's* Rouson: "Those students at Howard who are conscientious and concerned—and they are many—are torn between academics and politics, theory and action. Students know an education is a very real asset and we're here to learn all we can. We know that even in 1979 we are a privileged group to be able to study here. A lot of times this realization holds students back from act-







ing on the economic, political and social concerns that face society. They're torn."

Aside from this is the question of campus issues. The home base-issues students have rallied around during the past decade include: the reinstitution of comprehensive examinations in the College of Liberal Arts (viewed by some students as unfair, by many in the faculty and administration as a necessary way to measure students' academic progress); tenure and all its reverberations (the dismissal of a controversial woman medical school faculty member known for her well-publicized views on the superiority of Blacks led to charges the university was bowing to "white" pressure. The dismissal of a controversial white faculty member caused some in the media to raise the banner of "Black racism."); tuition increases (though Howard's tuition has remained far lower than that of comparable predominantly white institutions, its student body includes a large number from families with limited financial means); the fate of boarded-up university-owned houses in the LeDroit Park area (a problem the university administration is working on but not fast enough for some students in light of the critical housing shortages facing low-income people in the District of Columbia.)

"Yes, students have been concerned with many issues during the past 10 years," Dr. Anderson observes. "But while they do have strong concerns, there are not an awful lot who are interested in disrupting the functions of the university as a way to express these concerns. That's because, as I said before, the channels of communication are open."

For many observers, in fact, controversy is as vital to the development of the university as buildings or programs or other more concrete indicators of growth. Without controversy, a university would be an intellectual graveyard. That Howard has never been and has little chance of becoming. As Dr. Anderson adds, with more than a hint of exuberance in his voice, "This place is vital. Our students see themselves as future

leaders. Many of them seem to regard some sort of agitation, expression and push for change as an essential factor in their own personal development. This is one of the real strengths of the university." Then, he adds with a laugh, "I know one thing. It sure keeps you on your toes."

As it is, the Howard of today provides students with a much-enhanced backdrop for working out that personal—and academic—development. While some problems remain to be solved, the past decade has seen the university experience the greatest growth in its entire history. A growth with strong roots in the proud Howard past and strong aspirations towards an equally proud future.

In *that* lies the full impact of Dr. Cheek's leadership of Howard University. □

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Dr. James Edward Cheek

